

E

449

G23

An Address delivered
before free people of color in
Philadelphia and other cities
during the month of June, 1831
By William Lloyd Garrison.





Class 543

Book 143



AN

A D D R E S S,

174

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

530

FREE PEOPLE OF COLOR,

IN

PHILADELPHIA, NEW-YORK,

AND OTHER CITIES,

DURING THE MONTH OF JUNE, 1831.

BY WM. LLOYD GARRISON.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

SECOND EDITION.

BOSTON:
PRINTED BY STEPHEN FOSTER.

1831.

P R E F A C E.

THE following Address was written in great haste, and without the remotest expectation of its being published in its present shape. My colored brethren, in the various cities, having solicited its publication, I cheerfully comply with their request; believing that the matter is solid, and the advice worthy to be treasured up in every heart.

It is not probable that I shall be able to satisfy the great body of the people of my own color, otherwise than by entirely abandoning the cause of emancipation. They who do not hesitate to call me a madman, a fanatic, a disturber of the peace, a promoter of rebellion,—among other charitable epithets,—for vindicating the rights of the slaves, will naturally be offended if I presume to stand up in behalf of the free people of color, or to address them on a subject appertaining to their welfare. I am determined, nevertheless, to give slaveholders and their apologists as much uneasiness as possible. They shall hear me, and of me, and from me, in a tone and with a frequency that shall make them tremble. There shall be no neutrals: men shall either like or dislike me.

WM. LLOYD GARRISON.

Boston, July 4, 1831.

A D D R E S S.

I NEVER rise to address a colored audience, without feeling ashamed of my own color; ashamed of being identified with a race of men who have done you so much injustice, and who yet retain so large a portion of your brethren in servile chains. To make atonement, in part, for this conduct, I have solemnly dedicated my health, and strength, and life, to your service. I love to plan and to work for your social, intellectual, political and spiritual advancement. My happiness is augmented with yours: in your sufferings I participate.

Henceforth I am ready on all days, on all convenient occasions, in all suitable places, before any sect or party, at whatever perils to my person, character or interest, to plead the cause of my colored countrymen in particular, or of human rights in general. For this purpose, there is no day too holy, no place improper, no body of men too inconsiderable to address. For this purpose, I ask no church to grant me authority to speak—I require no ordination—I am not careful to consult Martin Luther, or John Calvin, or His Holiness the Pope. It is a duty, which, as a lover of justice, I am bound to execute; as a lover of my fellow-men, I ought not to shun; as a lover of Jesus Christ, and of his equalizing, republican and benevolent precepts, I rejoice to meet.

Countrymen and Friends! I wish to gladden your hearts, and to invigorate your hopes. Be assured, your cause is going onward—right onward. The seed is now sowing broadcast,

which is shortly to yield you an abundant harvest. Your advocates are constantly multiplying all over the country ; and, as far as I know them, not one will ever forsake you. New schemes are agitating for your benefit, which will doubtless be carried into successful operation. The signs of the times do indeed show forth great and glorious and sudden changes in the condition of the oppressed. The whole firmament is tremulous with an excess of light—the earth is moved out of its place—the wave of revolution is dashing in pieces ancient and mighty empires—the hearts of tyrants are beginning to fail them for fear, and for looking forward to those things which are to come upon the earth. There is

‘ A voice on every wave,
A sound on every sea !
The watch-word of the brave,
The anthem of the free !
From steep to steep it rings,
Through Europe’s many climes,
A knell to despot Kings,
A sentence on their crimes :
From every giant hill, companion of the cloud,
The startled echo leaps to give it back aloud :
Where’er a wind is rushing,
Where’er a stream is gushing,
The swelling sounds are heard,
Of man to freeman calling,
Of broken fetters falling—
And, like the carol of a cageless bird,
The bursting shout of Freedom’s rallying word ! ’

Glory to God in the highest, for the prospect which he holds out to our vision. Take courage, then, my friends. Though your enemies appear numerous, and boast themselves against you,—fear not : the Lord God is on your side. The Colonization Society may plot your removal to a foreign land—to Africa—but they will not succeed. I believe, as firmly as I do my own existence, that the time is not far distant, when you and the trampled slaves will all be free—free in the spirit as well as the letter—and enjoy the the same rights in this country as other citizens. Every one of you shall sit under

your own vine and fig-tree, and none shall molest or make you afraid.

Do you sigh and pant for the arrival of that period? I know you do. It is my object, in this address, to show what you can do to hasten it.

1st. Respect yourselves, if you desire the respect of others. A self-love which excludes God and the world from the affections, is a different thing from self-respect. A man should value himself at a high price—not because he happens to be of this or that color, or rich, or accomplished, or popular, or physically powerful—but because he is created in the image of God; because he stands but a little lower than the angels; because he has a spiritual essence, which is destined to live forever; because he is capable of exerting a moral power, which is infinitely superior to animal strength; and because he lives in a world of trial and temptation, and needs the sympathy and aid of his fellow men. If he be dead to all these lofty considerations; if, in the words of the poet—

‘He lies in dull, oblivious dreams, nor cares
Who the wreathed laurel bears;’

if his highest ambition be to grovel with brutes; it is not possible for him to command public or private respect; his company will be shunned; he will live and die a libel upon his Creator. So it will be with a people who are lost to themselves and the world.

Do not imagine that you are only a blank in creation, and therefore it is immaterial what you are in conduct or condition. Remember that not only the eyes of the people in this place, but the eyes of the whole nation, are fixed upon you. I dare not predict how far your example may affect the welfare of the slaves; but undoubtedly it is in your power, by this example, to break many fetters, or to keep many of your brethren in bondage. If you are temperate, industrious, peaceable and pious; if you return good for evil, and blessing for cursing; you will show to the world, that the slaves can be emancipated

without danger : but if you are turbulent, idle and vicious, you will put arguments into the mouths of tyrants, and cover your friends with confusion and shame.

Many of you, I rejoice to know, have found out the secret of preferment. I appeal to your experience and observation : as a general rule, have you not acquired the esteem, confidence and patronage of the whites, in proportion to your increase in knowledge and moral improvement ? Who are they, commonly, that suffer the most among you ? They who are intemperate, indolent and grovelling. Is it not so ? Self-respect, my friends, is a lever which will lift you out of the depths of degradation, and establish your feet upon a rock, and put a song of victory into your mouths—victory over prejudice, pride and oppression.

All things considered, you have certainly done well as a body. There are many colored men whom I am proud to rank among my friends ; whose native vigor of mind is remarkable ; whose morals are unexceptionable ; whose homes are the abodes of contentment, plenty and refinement. For my own part, when I reflect upon the peculiarities of your situation ; what indignities have been heaped upon your heads ; in what utter dislike you are generally held even by those who profess to be the ministers and disciples of Christ—and how difficult has been your chance to arrive at respectability and affluence, I marvel greatly, not that you are no more enlightened and virtuous, but that you are not like wild beasts of the forests. I fully coincide with the sentiment of Mr. Jefferson, that the men must be prodigies who can retain their manners and morals under such circumstances. Surely you have reason to bless God that his grace has kept you from utter ruin.

I said you had already done well, as a people ; but you can and will do better. Remember what a singular relation you sustain to society. The necessities of the case require not only that you should behave as well as the whites, but better than the whites—and for this reason : if you behave no better than they, (and I do not think the task would be difficult to excel

them,) your example will lose a great portion of its influence. It should stand out to the world, like a pillar of light, above and beyond that of any other people.

2dly. Make the Lord Jesus Christ your refuge and exemplar. It is out of my province, and far from my object, to sermonize ; but, believing as I do, that through Christ strengthening you, you may do all things—that His is the only standard around which you can successfully rally, and He the great Captain of Salvation in this warfare—I cannot but commend Him to your imitation and confidence. If ever there were a people who needed the consolations of religion, to sustain them in their grievous afflictions, you are that people. You turn to the right hand for relief, but in vain ; to the left, but no succor arrives. Your friends, though zealous and confident, are few in number, and cannot change the hearts of men. Imagine, for a moment, that there is no Deity in existence—no God that rules in all the earth—and what would be your condition or prospect ? But if you do not implore his protection, He might as well cease to be, so far as your succor is concerned ; for he is a God that will be entreated. My brethren, it is a blessed thing that you are enabled to exclaim with the worshippers in Heaven—‘ Alleluia ! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth ! ’ And when, like them, you have cried with a loud voice, ‘ How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth ? ’ then, like them, white robes will be given unto every one of you, and you will shout, ‘ Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God : for true and righteous are his judgments ;—for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.’ Yea, every one of you will be able to say with the Psalmist, ‘ For lo, thine enemies, O Lord, for lo, thine enemies shall perish ; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered. But my horn shalt thou exalt, like the horn of the unicorn : I shall be anointed with fresh oil. Mine eye also shall see my desire on mine enemies,

and mine ears shall hear my desire of the wicked that rise up against me. I called upon the Lord in distress: the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place. The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? The Lord taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes. Happy is that people whose God is the Lord !'

I am happy to inform you, that the late General Convention of Colored Delegates, in Philadelphia, recommended (almost unanimously) the observance of the ensuing Fourth of July as a day of Fasting and Prayer among your churches throughout the land. I hope you will comply with this recommendation, and earnestly call upon God to give you relief and to take away your reproach forever. One or two of the Delegates, to my surprise and sorrow, opposed the fast, and spoke of it as hypocritical and unnecessary. It is unnecessary, if you and your cause are independent of God; if you have no grievances to lay before him; if you are so holy, as to need no repentance and forgiveness of sin. It is unnecessary, if you cannot fast except as hypocrites. Objections were made to the day that was recommended—the Fourth of July. It was deemed a matter of great moment to have orations, barbecues, toasts, &c. &c. on that day. As to this mode of celebration, I rejoice to know that it is going out of fashion among the whites: it is a poor kind of patriotism, which approves of dram-drinking and rioting. The day is becoming sacred to benevolent purposes, and to rational worship. If any colored man can feel happy on the Fourth of July, it is more than I can do. To me it is the most unhappy day in the whole three hundred and sixty-five. The ringing of bells and the thundering of cannon are torture to my feelings. I cannot be happy when I listen to the rant of lying declaimers, or think of the daring mockery to God, in which a whole nation combines. I cannot be happy when I know that those braggarts, who are

stunning my ears with their boasts of liberty, are holding two millions of my countrymen in a state of servitude, which, for cruelty and debasement, nothing in the dark ages can parallel :—two millions, whose carcasses are thrown to the fowls of heaven ; whose blood drenches the ground which they till ; whose sighs freight every wind ; who are lacerated with whips ; who are branded with red hot irons ; who are torn asunder, and sold like cattle ; who are scantily fed with the coarsest food ; whose nakedness is but half concealed by rags ; the eyes of whose souls are put out, and from whom is hid the glorious gospel of the blessed God. I cannot be happy when I look at the burdens under which the free people of color labor,—fettered by unjust laws, driven beyond the pale of society, shut out from the path of preferment, cramped in the pursuits of industry. As a white citizen, I am as tall as any man in the nation ; my rights are amply secured ; I lack nothing. Yet, I repeat, if there be a colored man who feels happy on the Fourth of July, he feels what I cannot.

A word more as to the efficacy of prayer. Perhaps the true reason why the cause of emancipation progresses so slowly, is because so few petitions are put up to the Throne of Grace on the subject. Certainly it is a rare occurrence to hear it referred to by our white clergymen, in their public supplications ; and, I fear, few of our white church members ever allude to it. Is there as much prayer among you as the exigency of the case demands ? Prayer will forward the work faster than all the pens in the land : we can do nothing without it. There is no one so poor but he can give the donation of a prayer.

3dly. Sustain, as far as you can, those periodicals which are devoted to your cause. I speak on this subject pointedly, not with any selfish feelings, but because I know that without the powerful energies of the press, every cause must languish. It was this tremendous engine which produced and triumphantly effected the American Revolution ; it has twice overthrown the despotism in France ; it is fanning the flame of liberty in the bosoms of the Poles ; its power is shaking the government

of Great Britain to its centre. The press, in a manner, possesses the gift of ubiquity: it enables a man to address himself to thousands in every State at the same moment, and to throw his influence from one end of the country to the other: it has taken the place of the ancient oracles, and exercises a higher authority. The press is the citadel of liberty—the palladium of a free people. Multiply periodicals among yourselves, to be conducted by men of your own color. The cause of emancipation demands at least one hundred presses.

4thly. Whenever you can, put your children to trades. A good trade is better than a fortune, because when once obtained, it cannot be taken away. I know the difficulties under which you labor, in regard to this matter. I know how unwilling master mechanics are to receive your children, and the strength of that vulgar prejudice which reigns in the breasts of the working classes. But by perseverance in your applications, you may often succeed in procuring valuable situations for your children. As strong as prejudice is in the human breast, there is another feeling yet stronger—and that is, selfishness. Place two mechanics by the side of each other—one colored, and the other white: he who works the cheapest and best, will get the most custom. In making a bargain, the color of a man will never be consulted. Now, there can be no reason why your sons should fail to make as ingenious and industrious mechanics, as any white apprentices; and when they once get trades, they will be able to accumulate money; money begets influence, and influence respectability. Influence, wealth and character will certainly destroy those prejudices which now separate you from society.

5thly. Get as much education as possible for yourselves and your offspring. Toil long and hard for it as for a pearl of great price. An ignorant people can never occupy any other than a degraded station in society: they can never be truly free until they are intelligent. It is an old maxim that knowledge is power; and not only is it power, but rank, wealth, dignity and protection. That capital brings the highest interest to a

city, state or nation, (as the case may be,) which is invested in schools, academics and colleges. The greatest gift which a parent can bestow upon his child, is a knowledge of the alphabet. He who can read, may feel that he is elevated above all the kingly blockheads in the world. If I had children, rather than they should grow up in ignorance, I would feed upon bread and water, and repose upon the cold earth : I would sell my teeth, or extract the blood from my veins.

I have spoken of the difficulty experienced in getting trades for your children. Perhaps one important obstacle is, their want of education. It ought not to surprise us, that master mechanics (independent of prejudice) prefer white boys to colored ones, when the former are so much better instructed. When yours become as well versed in the common rudiments of education, I conceive there will not be the same difficulty which now exists.

While on the subject of education, it may be proper for me to make a few remarks in relation to the new College for the instruction of colored youth, which is proposed to be located in New Haven, Ct. It is known to some of you at least, that my principal object in recently visiting Philadelphia, (in company with two eminent philanthropists,) was for the purpose of commanding the College to the approbation of your General Convention. Of course, I am warmly interested in its establishment. As many doubtless are present, who would like to know the why and wherefore of this project, I shall briefly give some of the reasons why I cherish it.

I am in favor of the College, first, for the very obvious reason that colored young men, however suitably prepared for admission, are generally excluded from our white colleges. If this were the only reason, I should not want another. Until your children can enter into competition with the whites, on equal grounds, they can never come up to the whites ; consequently the assertion will still be confidently made, that they are of inferior capacity. Now, it is high time to have the question settled, whether you are as intellectual as your white skeptics.

Interest, self-respect, ambition, glory, all demand the trial. I, for one, have no fears of the result. Should the College go into operation, I have no doubt colored young men will be graduated whom the country, yea the world, will delight to honor; who will put to open shame your incredulous traducers, and finish the controversy which has so long divided public opinion.

‘The spirit cannot always sleep in dust,
Whose essence is ethereal; they may try
To darken and degrade it; it may rust
Dimly awhile, but cannot wholly die;
And, when it wakens, it will send its fire
Intenser forth and higher.’

I offer another reason. After the first four years, there will annually be graduated a band of educated men, who will be prepared to measure quills with the mightiest writers in the land, and to vindicate your rights in a manner which no white man is able to do. It is exhilarating to imagine the amount of moral influence which they will accumulate and disburse. Is it a small matter to send out a company of intellectual giants every year, to give battle to oppression? Recollect that as they rise in public estimation, so will your whole body.

A third reason is, that, at the College, labor will be combined with study, just so far as to make it a pleasant recreation, and yet productive of gain. By this means, the poorest youth will be enabled to procure a first-rate education, and to stand on an equality with the son of the wealthiest individual. This single consideration should commend the College to all classes, and particularly to the poor;—but there is another quite as important. The students will be fitted to pursue not only the professions of Law, Medicine and Divinity, but mercantile, mechanical and agricultural employments. This will increase the value of the institution a hundred fold.

My fourth reason I conceive to be an important one. At present, nearly all your primary and intermediate schools, in every place, are in a languishing state. Your children can

advance only to a short and an imperfect line of education, and there they are cut off. There is little to stimulate them to exertion. I am certain, therefore, that a College which secures equal advantages to them, whatever may be their condition, will infuse new vigor into your common schools, and kindle a flame of emulation which shall spread to the utmost boundaries of your population. It will give an accession of learners, from those who are beginning to encounter the perils of the alphabet up to those who begin to discern the mysteries of grammar and arithmetic. If any colored teachers imagine that the College will hurt their own schools, they are mistaken ; it will put money into their pockets.

The last reason which I shall offer at this time is, that such an institution will be to you, as a people, what the sun is to the world. Its light will be seen in every land, chasing the mists of prejudice, and blazing with unquenchable lustre. Where now all is darkness and desolation, it will illumine and renovate. Barren soils shall be clothed with a beautiful vegetation, and the germs of knowledge spring up in desert places. What Yale College, at New Haven, has done for the whites, (and it has been the great ocean of literature and science, whose streams have fertilised the shores of this country and of all Europe with an annual inundation like the Nile)—I say, what that venerated institution has done for the whites, may in time be done by the new College for the colored people. My heart enlarges in contemplating this subject. I lose sight of your present situation, and look at it only in futurity. I imagine myself surrounded by educated men of color, the Websters, and Clays, and Hamiltons, and Dwights, and Edwardses of the day. I listen to their voices as Judges, and Representatives, and Rulers of the people—the whole people.

6thly. As it is by association that the condition of man is made better, and bodies of men rise up simultaneously from a state of degradation, I recommend to you the formation of societies for moral improvement. The whites have their Reading Societies, their Debating Societies, their Literary Associa-

tions and Lyceums. What is the consequence? These are bursting open the arcana of knowledge, and distributing the hidden treasures of ages among the working-classes. Every member goes to give what information he has got, and returns with an accumulation of intelligence. Mind answers to mind—heart to heart—hand to hand. A common sympathy is felt in each other's condition—an enduring chain of friendship is formed, which time cannot rust. Be not content with one society in a place—multiply and diversify your associations. Let the women have theirs—*no cause can get along without the powerful aid of woman's influence.* Begin at once to combine together. If you cannot get but two or three with whom to commence, no matter: begin—persevere—be active, and you will grow to great bodies.

7thly. SUPPORT EACH OTHER. Let me earnestly impress upon your minds the necessity of UNION—of giving up, for the common good, those petty divisions and jealousies which are likely to keep you asunder. When this is effected, you will be a strong people—a great people. Half a million of men, moved by one spirit, seeing with one eye, having but one object, may accomplish more than ten millions who agree upon nothing—care for nothing—hope for nothing.

When I say, SUPPORT EACH OTHER—I mean, sell to each other, and buy of each other, in preference of the whites. This is a duty: the whites do not trade with you,—why should you give them your patronage? If one of your number opens a little shop, do not pass it by to give your money to a white shopkeeper. If any has a trade, employ him as often as possible. If any is a good teacher, send your children to him, and be proud that he is one of your color. It seems to me that if you would strictly pursue this course of conduct, your extreme poverty would vanish.

8thly. Maintain your rights, in all cases, and at whatever expense. Although I address you as freemen and countrymen, *you are not free.* It is true, that no tyrannical masters domineer over your persons; that your bodies are not mutilated

by the lash of a driver ; that your children are under your own authority, and are not liable to be sold at public or private sale ; that you may worship God according to the dictates of your own consciences, and enjoy the fruits of your own labor. But still you do not hold that rank in society, which, as free citizens, you ought to occupy ; you are looked upon as an inferior caste, hardly superior to the slaves in your attainments and circumstances ; you are not sufficiently protected in your persons and rights. There is scarcely a State in the Union, in which, as a people, you do not suffer from unconstitutional enactments. In some parts of the country, you are not allowed to sit on a jury, or to be received as witnesses ; in others, although compelled to pay taxes, you are not allowed to vote, or to send your children to the common schools, or to learn the alphabet, under severe penalties. In travelling through the slave States, you are in constant peril. Any constable may seize you as runaway slaves, bind you with ropes and chains, throw you into prison with murderers and robbers, (and I have seen this frequently done,) confine you thirty or sixty days, and if you cannot prove your freedom, you will be sold into bondage to pay your jail fees ! In fact, liberty is little better than a name—a mockery—to men in your condition. To borrow the words of Edmund Burke : ‘To render men patient, under a deprivation of all the rights of human nature, everything which can give them a knowledge and feeling of those rights, is rationally forbidden. To render humanity fit to be insulted, it is fit that it should be degraded.’ The several States in the Union understand and practise upon this doctrine. There is, my countrymen and friends, a remedy for such injustice. The Constitution of the United States knows nothing of white or black men ; it makes no invidious distinction with regard to the color or condition of free inhabitants ; it is broad enough to cover your persons ; it has power enough to vindicate your rights. Thanks be to God that we have such a Constitution ! Without it, the liberty of every man,—white as well as colored,—would be in jeopardy.

There it stands, firm as the rock of Gibraltar, a high refuge from oppression.

I say, then—and I appeal with confidence to the great body of lawyers—that those State Laws which disfranchise and degrade you, are unconstitutional. I say that if they fall upon the Constitution, they will be dashed in pieces. I say that it is your duty to carry this question up to the Supreme Court of the United States, and have it settled forever. You have everything to gain, and nothing to lose, by the trial. I say that, having the means of protection in your own hands, it is your interest, as well as duty, to put them forth. Once get yourselves acknowledged, by that august tribunal, as citizens of the United States, and you may walk abroad in majesty and strength, free as the air of heaven, sacred as the persons of kings. Cases are constantly occurring in some of the States, which may be carried up at any moment for a final decision: no time should be lost.

Again I say, maintain your rights as you would defend your lives. Wherever you are allowed to vote, see that your names are put on the lists of voters, and go to the polls. If you are not strong enough to choose a man of your own color, give your votes to those who are friendly to your cause; but, if possible, elect intelligent and respectable colored men. I do not despair of seeing the time when our State and National Assemblies will contain a fair proportion of colored representatives;—especially if the proposed College at New Haven goes into successful operation.

The right of petitioning for a redress of grievances belongs to you as free citizens. This right should be immediately exercised wherever unjust disabilities are imposed upon you. Perhaps no body of men need watching more carefully than the representatives of the people. Those who are not aristocrats in principle, are bunglers in legislation—making all due allowance for honest and intelligent men; and they are constantly infringing upon individual or corporate rights, or running their heads against the Constitution. Petitions and re-

monstrances are the remedies for these evils, if applied with promptness and decision. Send your complaints, then, (if you have any,) to the Legislature; and if your prayer be refused seven times, send seventy times seven. Weary if you cannot persuade them to grant you redress.

Finally. Abandon all thoughts of colonizing yourselves, as a people, in Africa, Hayti, Upper Canada, or elsewhere. Every intelligent man of color, whom the Colonization Society induces to go to Liberia, ought to be considered as a traitor to your cause. If any individual thinks he can better his condition by removing to the Colony in Upper Canada, I would not by any means discourage him. But, I repeat, do not hold out your determination, *as a people*, to leave the country: it will do you immense injury.

Permit me to trace the injurious effects of colonization.

The supporters of the African scheme do not hesitate to avow, that the whole colored population must be removed to Liberia. But how do they expect to accomplish this design? By putting on knapsacks, and pointing bayonets at your breasts? No—but by adopting another plan which is about as cruel and effectual. By removing some of your number every year, they persuade the people that your entire removal will not be difficult. The people, cherishing this opinion, yet perceiving how reluctantly you go, resolve to starve you out. They are determined to give you as little instruction and employment as possible, in order to render your situation so uncomfortable as to compel you to remove. As long, therefore, as a considerable portion of your number consent to be removed, no matter where, the same disastrous effects will follow. Those who remain (of course, the great body) will obtain little or no employment, and receive little or no education; consequently they will always be miserable and degraded. Now, it is time to stop: it is time to resolve on death sooner than transportation: it is time to let the people know that this is your only home, from which no flattery shall seduce, no temptation exile, no threats drive you. If you would put out a fire, do not throw

oil on to it: if you would destroy the Colonization Society, you must to a man refuse to go; you must hold an active correspondence on the subject with your brethren all over the country, and conjure them all to stand firm. The public will then be convinced that you are in earnest, and will feel necessitated to admit you to the rank of citizens. If you will do your duty, and hold on with a firm grasp, I assert that liberty --equality--every republican privilege is yours. Be not dismayed: your prospects are brightening--the victory is half won--the tide of public sentiment is turning in your favor--and your deliverance is sure. What! shall you despair of success in this republican land,—your own country,—when your brethren, under the despotism of imperial governments, are admitted to free and equal rights! Look how they rise in elevation, in the Danish, Portuguese, French and British Colonies! Will you despair when the signs of the times are so glorious and auspicious! Will you despair now so many champions are coming up to your help, and the trump of jubilee is sounding long and loud; when is heard a voice from the East, a voice from the West, a voice from the North, a voice from the South, crying, *Liberty and Equality now, Liberty and Equality forever!* Will you despair, seeing Truth, and Justice, and Mercy, and God, and Christ, and the Holy Ghost, are on your side! O, no—never, never despair of the complete attainment of your rights!

Let me briefly examine the doctrines of colonizationists. They generally agree in publishing the misstatement, that you are strangers and foreigners. Surely they know better. They know that, as a body, you are no more natives of Africa, than they themselves are natives of Great Britain. Yet they repeat the absurd charge; and they do so, in order to cover their anti-republican crusade. But suppose you were foreigners: would such an accident justify this persecution and removal? And, if so, then all foreigners must come under the same ban, and must prepare to depart. There would be, in that case, a most alarming deduction from our population. Suppose a

philanthropic and religious crusade were got up against the Dutch, the French, the Swiss, the Irish, among us, to remove them to New Holland, to enlighten and civilize her cannibals? Who would not laugh at the scheme—who would not actively oppose it? Would any one blame the above classes for steadfastly resisting it? Just so, then, in regard to African Colonization. But our colored population are not aliens; they were born on our soil; they are bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; their fathers fought bravely to achieve our independence during the revolutionary war, without immediate or subsequent compensation; they spilt their blood freely during the last war; they are entitled, in fact, to every inch of our southern, and much of our western territory, having worn themselves out in its cultivation, and received nothing but wounds and bruises in return. Are these the men to stigmatize as foreigners?

Colonizationists generally agree in asserting that the people of color cannot be elevated in this country, nor be admitted to equal privileges with the whites. Is not this a libel upon humanity and justice—a libel upon republicanism—a libel upon the Declaration of Independence—a libel upon christianity? ‘All men are born *equal*, and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights—among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.’ What is the meaning of that declaration? That *all* men possess these rights—whether they are six feet five inches high, or three feet two and a half—whether they weigh three hundred or one hundred pounds—whether they parade in broadcloth or flutter in rags—whether their skins are jet black or lily white—whether their hair is straight or woolly, auburn or red, black or grey—does it not? We, who are present, differ from each other in our looks, in our color, in height, and in bulk; we have all shades, and aspects, and sizes. Now, would it not be anti-republican and anti-christian for us to quarrel about sitting on this seat or that, because this man’s complexion is too dark, or that man’s looks are too ugly? and to put others out of the house, because

they happen to be ignorant, or poor, or helpless? To commit this violence would be evidently wrong: then to do it in a large assemblage—in a community, in a state, or in a nation, it is equally unjust. But is not this the colonization principle? Who are the individuals that applaud, that justify, that advocate this exclusion? Who are they that venture to tell the American people, that they have neither honesty enough, nor patriotism enough, nor morality enough, nor religion enough, to treat their colored brethren as countrymen and citizens? Some of them—I am sorry to say—are professedly ministers of the gospel; others are christian professors; others are judges and lawyers; others are our Senators and Representatives; others are editors of newspapers. These ministers and christians dishonor the gospel which they profess; these judges and lawyers are the men spoken of by the Saviour, who bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. These Senators and Representatives ought not to receive the suffrages of the people. These editors are unworthy of public patronage.

Colonizationists too generally agree in discouraging your instruction and elevation at home. They pretend that ignorance is bliss; and therefore it is folly to be wise. They pretend that knowledge is a dangerous thing in the head of a colored man; they pretend that you have no ambition; they pretend that you have no brains; in fine, they pretend a thousand other absurd things—they are a combination of pretences. What tyranny is this? Shutting up the human intellect—binding with chains the inward man—and perpetuating ignorance. May we not address them in the language of Christ? ‘Wo unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in! Ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith.’

Colonizationists generally agree in apologising for the crime of slavery. They get behind the contemptible subterfuge, that it was entailed upon the planters. As if the continuance of the horrid system were not criminal ! as if the robberies of another generation justified the robberies of the present ! as if the slaves had not an inalienable right to freedom ! as if slavery were not an individual as well as a national crime ! as if tearing asunder families, limb from limb,—branding the flesh with red hot irons,—mangling the body with whips and knives,—feeding it on husks and clothing it with rags,—crushing the intellect and destroying the soul,—as if such inconceivable cruelty were not chargeable to those who inflicted it !

As to the effect of colonization upon slavery, it is rather favorable than injurious to the system. Now and then, indeed, there is a great flourish of trumpets, and glowing accounts of the willingness of planters to emancipate their slaves on condition of transportation to Africa. Now and then a slave is actually manumitted and removed, and the incident is dwelt upon for months. Why, my friends, hundreds of worn-out slaves are annually turned off to die, like old horses. No doubt their masters will thank the Colonization Society, or any one else, to send them out of the country ; especially as they will gain much glorification in the newspapers, for their *disinterested* sacrifices. Let no man be deceived by these manœuvres.

My time is consumed—and yet I have scarcely entered upon the threshold of my argument. Now, what a spectacle is presented to the world !—the American people, boasting of their free and equal rights—of their abhorrence of aristocratical distinctions—of their republican equality ; proclaiming on every wind, ‘that all men are born *equal*, and endowed with certain inalienable *rights*,’ and that this land is an asylum for the persecuted of all nations ; and yet as loudly proclaiming that they are determined to deprive millions of their own countrymen of every political and social right, and to send them to a barbarous continent, because the Creator has given them a sable complexion. Where exists a more rigorous despotism ?

What conspiracy was ever more cruel? What hypocrisy and tergiversation so enormous? The story is proclaimed in our pulpits, in our state and national assemblies, in courts of law, in religious and secular periodicals,—among all parties, and in all quarters of the country,—that there is a *moral incapacity* in the people to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk uprightly—that they must always be the enemies and oppressors of the colored people—that no love of liberty, no dictate of duty, no precept of republicanism, no dread of retribution, no claim of right, no injunction of the gospel, can possibly persuade them to do unto their colored countrymen, as they would that they should do unto them in a reversal of circumstances. Now, to these promulgators of unrighteousness, with the Declaration of Independence in one hand, and the Bible in the other, I fearlessly give battle. Rich and mighty and numerous as they are, by the help of the Lord I will put them to open shame. They shall not libel me, they shall not libel my country, with impunity. They shall not make our boasted republicanism a by-word and a hissing among all nations, nor sink the christian religion below heathen idolatry; and if they persist in publishing their scandalous proclamations, they shall be labelled as the enemies of their species and of the republic, and treated accordingly.

The Colonization Society, therefore, instead of being a philanthropic and religious institution, is anti-republican and anti-christian in its tendency. Its pretences are false, its doctrines odious, its means contemptible. If we are to send away the colored population because they are profligate and vicious, what sort of missionaries will they make? Why not send away the vicious among the whites, for the same reason and the same purpose? If ignorance be a crime, where shall we begin to select? How much must a man know to save him from transportation? How white must he be? If we send away a mixed breed, how many will be left? If foreigners only, then the people of color must remain—for they are our countrymen. Would foreigners submit? No—not for an

instant. Why should the American people make this enormous expenditure of life and money? Why not use the funds of the Society to instruct and elevate our colored population at home? This would be rational and serviceable. Instead of removing men from a land of civilization and knowledge—of schools, and seminaries, and colleges—to give them instruction in a land of darkness and desolation—would it not be wiser and better to reverse the case, and bring the ignorant here for cultivation?

In bestowing our censure upon the Colonization Society, my brethren and friends, justice requires us to discriminate between its supporters. Of the benevolent and disinterested intentions of many individuals, especially in the free States, we ought not to doubt. It is true, they are carried away in the popular current, but they would not willingly harm a hair of your heads. I rejoice to know, that they are waking from their delusion; that, as the light blazes upon their vision, they begin to see and repudiate the monstrous doctrines of the Society; and that conversions from colonization to abolition principles are multiplying with singular rapidity. Let us not despair of seeing a speedy, radical and total change in public opinion.

In conclusion, I would adopt and modify the language of the eloquent Brougham:

I trust that at length the time is come, when the people of the free States will no longer bear to be told that slave-owners are the best lawgivers on slavery. *Tell me not of rights*—talk not of the property of the planter in his slaves. I deny the right—I acknowledge not the property. The principles, the feelings of our common nature, rise in rebellion against it. Be the appeal made to the understanding or to the heart, the sentence is the same that rejects it. In vain you tell me of the laws that sanction such a claim! There is a law above all the enactments of human codes—the same throughout the world, the same in all times—such as it was before the daring genius of Columbus pierced the night of ages, and opened to one world the sources of power, wealth and knowledge; to

another, all unutterable woes;—such it is at this day: it is the law written by the finger of God on the heart of man; and by that law, unchangeable and eternal, while men despise fraud, and loathe rapine, and abhor blood, they shall reject with indignation the wild and guilty fantasy, that man can hold property in man! In vain you appeal to treaties, to covenants between nations. The covenants of the Almighty, whether the old or the new, denounce such unholy pretensions. To those laws did they of old refer, who maintained the African trade: such treaties did they cite. Yet, in despite of law and of treaties, that infernal traffic is now destroyed, and its votaries put to death like other pirates. How came this change to pass? Not assuredly by Congress leading the way; but the country at length awoke; the indignation of the people was kindled; it descended in thunder, and smote the traffic, and scattered its guilty profits to the winds. Now, then, let the planters beware—let their assemblies beware—let the government beware!—the same country is once more awake,—awake to the condition of African slavery; the same indignation kindles in the bosom of the same people; the same cloud is gathering that annihilated the slave trade; and, if it shall descend again, they, on whom its crash shall fall, will not be destroyed before I have warned them; but I pray that their destruction may turn away from us the more terrible judgments of God!

‘Spirit of Freedom, on!
 Oh! pause not in thy flight,
 Till every clime is won,
 To worship in thy light:
 Speed on thy glorious way,
 And wake the sleeping lands,—
 Millions are watching for the ray,
 And lift to thee their hands:
 On! till thy name is known,
 Throughout the peopled earth;
 On! till thou reign’st alone,—
 Man’s heritage by birth;
 On! till from every vale, and where the mountains rise,
 The beacon lights of Liberty shall kindle to the skies! ’

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 011 898 936 3

